

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 405 561

CS 012 749

AUTHOR Bounds, Sharon Lynn
TITLE Parent Satisfaction with Reading Recovery.
PUB DATE 96
NOTE 80p.; Ed. Specialist Project, University of Alabama.
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143) --
Dissertations/Theses - Undetermined (040)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC04 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Early Intervention; Inner City; *Parent Attitudes;
Parent Participation; Parent Student Relationship;
Primary Education; Program Effectiveness;
Questionnaires; Reading Research; *Remedial
Reading
IDENTIFIERS Parent Interview; *Reading Recovery Projects

ABSTRACT

A study examined the level of satisfaction experienced by parents whose children participated in the first year of the Reading Recovery program at Hazelwood Elementary School (a large inner-city school in the southeastern United States) during the 1995-96 school year. Interviews were conducted with 19 parents (out of a total of 31 parents) and 11 parents completed questionnaires. Results indicated that parents (1) felt their children had been helped by the program; (2) reported that Reading Recovery homework was always or almost always completed at home; (3) provided their children with trade books and other reading materials; (4) for the most part, said they did not take their children to the library, although many planned to do so in the future; (5) reported they were reading more with their children; (6) were able to evaluate their child's reading progress; (7) reported that their children performed better in school, exhibited improved discipline, and/or felt better about themselves; (8) would recommend the Reading Recovery program to friends or neighbors; (9) reported that both they and their children liked the Reading Recovery teacher; and (10) reported that, prior to entry into the program, they had tried unsuccessfully to help their child improve his or her reading skills. Recommendations include: Reading Recovery is successful and should be continued at the school; the program should be expanded; follow-up studies on parents and children should be conducted; and the other Reading Recovery sites in the school system should be examined. (Contains 29 references. Appendixes present the parent questionnaire, the parent letter, a permission letter, and the certificate of completion.) (RS)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
from the original document. *

05

ED 405 561

PARENT SATISFACTION WITH READING RECOVERY

by

SHARON LYNN BOUNDS

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION
CENTER (ERIC)

- ☒ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
- ☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

- Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND
DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL
HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Ed. S. Research Project

S. Bounds

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES
INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the Education Specialist Degree in Elementary Education
in the Graduate School,
The University of Alabama
at Birmingham

BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA

1996

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

05012749

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There are as many ways to help and influence people as there are individuals walking our planet. Some very special individuals helped me in different, yet important ways in this endeavor.

Dr. Maryann Manning in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction was a guiding light and primary source of encouragement during the course of my studies at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. She gently nudged, suggested, edited, encouraged, praised, critiqued, and prodded me on in my educational course work and in the completion of this paper. I am also grateful to Dr. Gary Manning and Dr. Cecilia Pierce who shared their time and considerable expertise with me.

Mr. Jerry White, my principal, provided me with ongoing support and encouragement. Mr. White demonstrated his commitment to this project by allowing me the time and space necessary to conduct interviews with the parents of children served by the Reading Recovery program this school year. He expressed interest in the outcome of the project and found the time to talk to me as my research progressed.

A sincere thank you is also owed to Dr. Joan Buckley, director of Federal Programs for the Birmingham Public School System. Her interest and encouragement were constant. I am grateful to her for allowing me to question her on her extensive knowledge of the Title I program and for providing me with reference materials to help with my research.

My husband Michael and my daughter Marjorie were supportive in many ways. Sometimes their assistance came in the form of physical deeds. At other times, their willingness to give me time alone and space to work was deed enough.

Most importantly I would like to thank the teachers and parents whose voices are included in this work. I have learned much from them, and that is perhaps the greatest gift of all.

PROLOGUE

During the course of one school day, teachers wear many hats. They are: mothers, counselors, mediators, academic guides, accountants, nurses, social workers, co-learners, and many, many more. If we are lucky, they are also extremely committed to each and every child in their care.

First grade teachers, as a whole, are such a group. Their primary job, along with much nurturing, is to start children on a sound educational path as young readers, writers, and mathematicians. With class size increasing, the expectation that this will be possible for all children is becoming less and less a certainty.

Teachers want their students to succeed. They want them to become accomplished readers, writers, and mathematicians. This goal, however, is usually not one hundred percent attainable in most schools. Still, teachers worry and reflect about the few in their care who struggle academically. This is especially true in the area of reading. Because an entire educational career can pivot on this one skill, teachers often ask a critical question: How important is the salvation of one life? The rescue of one soul? The transformation of one child from that of non-reader to reader?

Cliff was the kind of child anyone could fall in love with. His smile was warm and genuine. His face was cherubic. He was always dressed in neat, colorful clothing and his sweet little voice could melt even the most hardened of hearts. Cliff, however, was anything but the angel he outwardly appeared to be.

Mrs. Bennington, Cliff's first grade teacher, described him to the researcher in terms which were less than endearing: troublemaker, devious, sneaky, mischievous, mean, and of course needy! Cliff was a child deemed to be "at risk" for reading failure after completing one year of school. Both his Kindergarten teacher and Mrs. Bennington had recommended Cliff as a candidate for the Reading Recovery program at Hazelwood Elementary during the 1994 -1995 school year.

The first few Reading Recovery sessions with Cliff revealed him to be a bright child who had not been exposed to many books. After approximately seventy, thirty minute lessons, Cliff emerged a fluent reader. His enthusiasm for books and for reading was noted by both his mother and his teacher. By the end of the school year Cliff was a different child. He had gone from making failing reading grades to A's. He had entered the "reading club" and it had changed not only his grades but his attitude toward school and his treatment of his fellow classmates as well. Speaking of the dramatic alteration in his behavior, Mrs. Bennington said, "I don't know what I would have done by the end of the year if I had had to deal with Cliff like *that* all year! I... I'd have been pulling my hair out!" Cliff was a first grade success story.

At the end of his third year in school, Cliff is making excellent reading progress and is able to read the last story in the grade level basal reader with 90% accuracy. His future as a reader is bright; therefore, his continued success in life is also promising. (Becoming a Nation of Readers, 1984)

Cliff was among the first four children taught by the researcher in the Reading Recovery program at Hazelwood Elementary School during the 1994-1995 school year. A total of nine children were tutored during that year by the researcher who was considered a Reading Recovery "teacher in training" at that time.

Never, in 20 years of teaching experience, had the researcher been part of a program so powerful that it could change lives in such an obvious and dramatic fashion. The two seasoned classroom teachers involved in the program were also impressed. Mrs. Bennington commented, "When you sit down and you actually look at what they were reading and what they were unable to read and the difficulties they were having in reading when they started and the progress that they had made! To take children who are having that much difficulty and bring them up to where they're reading with the average child and with most of the classroom is wonderful! And it makes them feel so much better!"

Both classroom teachers considered training to become Reading Recovery teachers. Mrs. Bennington was able to achieve this goal. She became a certified Reading Recovery teacher the next school year (1995-1996).

During the second year of the program an experienced Reading Recovery teacher joined the faculty. With this addition in staff, Hazelwood Elementary School became a "fully implemented" Reading Recovery site. Simply put, the school had enough teachers (3), to serve the bottom 20% of the 115 children in the five self-contained first grade classrooms.

The researcher spent her morning working with small groups of first grade children as a Title I teacher and tutoring Reading Recovery students in the afternoon. The other two Reading Recovery teachers shared a classroom. While Mrs. Bennington taught 23 first grade students in the morning, Mrs. Cotton worked with her Reading Recovery students and in the afternoon, their roles reversed.

A total of 32 first grade children were tutored during the 1995-1996 school year. Of those 32, only 3 children were dropped from the program. Two of those 3 children have been referred for special education services. A once skeptical classroom teacher admitted that, "Thanks to the Reading Recovery program, I have no one to recommend for summer school."

Anecdotal reports from parents seemed to indicate that they too were quite pleased with the program. Questionnaires sent home at the discontinuation of services for each child also echoed words of praise. Still, the researcher was interested in gaining a more detailed insight into parent reactions to the Reading Recovery program at Hazelwood. These primary caregivers were the less visible partners in this program. If parent observations and comments could be recorded and organized into a cohesive paper, the resulting report would benefit the system as a whole as well as the local school.

Questions also arose about the stark contrast between the old Chapter I

program the researcher had been a part of for ten years and the Reading Recovery program. Academic gains were made in the former program, however, they were minimal (Legters & Slavin, 1992; Spiegel, 1995; Stringfield, 1996). Gains made by Reading Recovery students were dramatic and happened in a relatively short amount of time. What made Reading Recovery so much more successful?

The original question posed in the prologue brings to mind a story. Martha, a Reading Recovery teacher shared her experience with a group of teachers in a training class attended by the researcher. Jimmy, one of her Reading Recovery students, had been smiling and noticeably excited all morning. When Martha passed his class in the hall he was anxious to share his good news. His mother was coming to watch a lesson that afternoon and he could hardly wait to show her "the miracle." "What miracle?" Martha asked. "The miracle that I can read!" replied Jimmy.

Addressing the issue of preventing reading failure in an article for *Phi Delta Kappan*, Slavin (1991) wrote:

A growing body of evidence from several sources indicates that reading failure in the early grades is fundamentally preventable....If reading failure can be prevented, it *must* be prevented. Chapter I is the logical program to take the lead in giving schools serving disadvantaged students the resources and programs necessary to see that all children learn to read. (p. 588)

If we now know that there are programs that will produce "miracles" for children all over the country, do we not have an obligation to find them, study them, and implement them, whatever the cost, time, and effort involved? America's children need an answer.

CHAPTER I

Introduction

Title I (formerly Chapter I) teachers have struggled for years with issues relating to poverty, illiteracy, remediation, parental involvement or lack of it, to name just a few. Their efforts, though committed and professional, have failed to produce significant gains in reading progress for the nation's children (Fagan & Heid, 1991; Slavin, 1991; and Stringfield 1996). "After over two decades of operation, however, the Title I / Chapter I program evaluations have been disappointing" (Buckley, p.2).

Furthermore, it has been noted that, for a child, the inability to acquire adequate reading skills by the third grade portends dire consequences for his or her future (Legters & Slavin, 1992; and Stringfield, 1996).

More bad news: 30 years of Title I notwithstanding, if a child cannot read reasonably well by the end of third grade, his/her probability of graduation from high school is virtually nil. There are many reasons why that statistic would be true, but one of them is that our K-3 curriculum is designed to teach young people to learn to read, and our 4-12 curriculum assumes that the same child will read to learn. If we want children to graduate from high school and find a decent job, we need to teach them to read well by the end of third grade. No "ifs," "ands," or "buts." (Stringfield, p.1)

It is the recognition of this urgent need and the acknowledgement of past failures which has prompted educators, administrators, and directors, to search for programs that will bring about significant improvement in the area of reading instruction. Much of this research has been done through the auspices of the Title I program.

Title I, (later Chapter I, and once again Title I), was originally created by President Lyndon B. Johnson as part of his concept of the "Great Society." Low-achieving children living in impoverished conditions were and are, the focus of supplemental instruction in mathematics and reading (Fairley, 1996; Slavin, Karweit, & Madden 1989).

Within Title I, there is much debate concerning the merits of pullout verses in-class models of instruction for these "most needy" children (Bean, 1992; Buckley, 1990; Slavin, 1991; and Slavin, Karweit, & Madden 1989). While that question cannot be settled within the scope of this paper, few if any, would dispute the idea that the *quality* of instruction rendered can positively or negatively influence student achievement (Slavin, Karweit, & Madden, 1989). "Clearly, there can be effective pullout programs and effective in-class programs to meet the needs of at-risk students" (Slavin, Karweit, and Madden p. 24).

What then are the characteristics of literacy programs that work? A review of the literature offers a chorus of voices advocating a variety of suggestions:

Buckley (1990) listed the following traits for the successful in-class model of instruction: (a) teacher interaction and cooperation (b) individualized instruction (c) small class sizes, and (d) increased interaction and cooperation in planning and teaching.

Timothy G. Morrison (1996), a professor at Brigham Young University, suggests the following - Let the children read more! To do this teachers should: (1) read to children every day, (2) set aside time each day for Sustained Silent Reading (SSR), (3) set aside time each week for book sharing, (4) provide the children with predictable books, and (5) use echo reading to help struggling readers develop fluency and a larger vocabulary. (pp. 4-5).

Thomas W. Payzant (1993) calls for high standards to replace minimum

standards. In order for teachers to teach these standards he asserts that an intensive and ongoing professional development program is needed. (p.7)

Mary Jean LeTendre (1993), Director of Compensatory Education Programs, also advocates a focus on high standards for all children. She recommends greater empowerment of schools to devise their own plans for success as well as increasing parent involvement (p.13).

Cynthia G. Brown (1993) reported on the findings of The Independent Review Panel established by Congress in 1990 to Assess Chapter I. The following represent some of the recommendations that were made:

- (1) Reform the whole school
- (2) Emphasize higher-order skills and high standards for all students
- (3) Focus on outcomes and adopt new assessments to measure them.
- (4) Intervene early and get parents involved in their children's (and their own) education
- (5) Involve parents in all aspects of the school program and enhance their ability to support their children's attainment of academic standards (pp. 41-42).

Slavin, Karweit, and Madden (1989) name four successful tutoring programs to prevent reading failure. One of the suggested programs is Reading Recovery.

"Clearly, Reading Recovery had a substantial positive effect on reading performance at the end of grade 1, and this effect is still detectable (and statistically significant) two years later." (p. 65) They also recommend that compensatory programs, such as Reading Recovery, contain a strong parent component. "The most potent impact can result from extension of learning into the home, with the parent as teacher" (p.287).

Dr. Richard Fairley (1996) notes that the new Title I regulations have mandated a stronger role for parents. "It has been well documented that children perform better in school if their parents and families are involved and participate in school activities.

...Thus, parental involvement was made a requirement in Title I programs." (p. 6).

An overriding theme in the recent initiative to improve Title I would seem to be that of "parent involvement" (Brown, 1993; Fairley, 1996; LeTendre, 1993; Slavin, Karweit, & Madden, 1989). When Dewey wrote My Pedagogic Creed in 1896, he expressed his vision of school life as one which flowed from the home. "I believe that as such simplified social life, the school life should grow gradually out of the home life; that it should take up and continue the activities with which the child is already familiar in the home." (p.23)

In 1983, the National Institute of Education sponsored a committee to examine the latest research and scholarship which might inform educational policy. Becoming a Nation of Readers is a result of that study. Page after page of the report confirms Dewey's belief that the parent / home connection should be a strong one.

Parents play roles of inestimable importance in laying the foundation for learning to read. A parent is a child's first tutor in unraveling the fascinating puzzle of written language. A parent is a child's one enduring source of faith that somehow, sooner or later, he or she will become a good reader. (p.27)

Adding their opinions to the deafening chorus of voices advocating parental involvement in early literacy are: Buttler & Clay, 1997; Morrow, Newman, Paratore, & Harrison, 1995; Shokley, Michalove, & Allen, 1995; and, Taylor & Strickland 1986. "Sharing storybooks helps children develop a sense of how stories are constructed, an important step in learning to read and write" (Taylor & Strickland, p.39).

Morrow (1995) proposes that parents can be "...the most important people in the education of their children" (p.6). This is an idea backed up by extensive research.

Still educators wonder, how parents can be involved in the education of their

children when there are so many obstacles to overcome? Parents work, children come from single-parent homes or homes without parents, many children live in poverty, some parents themselves cannot read, parents today just don't seem to care!

Sawyer and Comer (1991) suggest that communication is the key to effective parent involvement programs. Teachers need to communicate not only what is happening in the classroom but also tell parents how they themselves can provide help (p. 219).

Teachers must be sensitive to the fact that parents may not feel entirely comfortable in the school setting (Come & Fredericks, 1995).

Sometimes this fear of the formal institution of school is perceived by teachers to be a lack of parental interest - a factor that may contribute to the assumption that poor families should not, can not, and will not participate in school activities. Such assumptions lead to a significant breakdown in the communication process between home and school. (p. 20)

It is perhaps this phobic reaction to "school" which has led teachers and administrators to assume a lack of interest on the part of some parents. But, families, even the poorest of families, have much to contribute. Unfortunately, this is not a widely held view in this country. Morrow, Tracey, and Maxwell (1995) state that, "Educators in the United States of America have tended to hold a 'deficit orientation' to the educational concerns/problems of the poor and disadvantaged portion of our society" (p.3).

Those who oppose the deficit model propose instead the *wealth model* which stresses the strengths of all families. The wealth model emphasizes the need to discover which literacy patterns exist within families and build on those patterns, rather than imposing traditional school-like activities on parents (p.11).

Reading Recovery is a type of instruction which focuses on the wealth model as opposed to the deficit model of instruction. It looks for and supports the strengths in students rather than their weaknesses. This diagnostic early intervention program was developed by Marie Clay in New Zealand and imported to the United States through Ohio State University in 1984.

In this program, first grade students who have been identified as at-risk for reading failure, are tutored by highly trained Reading Recovery teachers during daily thirty minute sessions. Although length of time varies, the average amount of time required in the program is 16 weeks.

Before receiving actual lessons, students receive two weeks of "roaming around the known." During this time the teacher and child get to know each other. The Reading Recovery teacher uses this "roaming" period to make careful observations about how the child responds to print. Clay (1993) advises the teacher to, "Go over what he [the student] knows in different ways until your ingenuity runs out, and until he is moving fluently around this personal corpus of responses, the letters, words and messages that he knows how to read or write (p.13).

Actual lessons are highly structured. They consist of (1) rereading familiar books (2) taking a running record of a new book introduced the day before (3) letter work or word analysis- where words are taken apart and looked at (4) composing and writing a story which is then transcribed on a sentence strip and cut up into words or segments by the teacher and reassembled by the child (5) introduction and reading of a new book by the child and teacher.

At the end of the lesson the teacher and child pack up a reading bag which is then taken home for homework. In it the teacher has placed at least one natural language book, often more, to be read with parents at home. The cut-up sentence is also sent home to be reassembled with parents and glued to a homework pad. As the

lessons progress, the level of books sent home and the complexity of the story written on the cut-up sentence strip increase. The homework is then returned to school the next day where it is checked by the Reading Recovery teacher with the child.

While this format may seem simple and straightforward enough, Pinnell, Lyons & DeFord (1994) insist that it would be a mistake to assume that, given the setup of a typical Reading Recovery lesson, anyone would be able to duplicate it and obtain the same results (p.31). Reading Recovery teachers have been trained over the course of a school year in weekly two and one half hour sessions. They are taught to carefully analyze running records in order to discover how the child is processing print. They are also required to teach three sessions of "behind the glass" lessons where they work with one student for thirty minutes while their cohort group and teacher leader look on. Reading Recovery teachers are also trained to seize the teachable moment and use verbal prompts which encourage independence in their young students (Leitner, 1990). Pinnell, Fried, and Estice (1990) wrote:

The inservice training course is not designed to train the teachers to use a fixed set of procedures for the Reading Recovery program. Reading Recovery has a lesson framework and a menu of possibilities. Each option has the potential to succeed or fail, depending on its appropriate use for a particular child, at a particular context. Teachers have to learn to be expert decision makers in order to choose appropriate books and to select the most effective and powerful procedures for each child. (p. 289)

Communication with parents is a requirement of the Reading Recovery program. Reading Recovery teachers are asked to record the occasions of contact between parents and tutor. At the beginning of the school year, parents of children selected for the Reading Recovery program are asked to attend an informational meeting which introduces them to the program. After children are secure in the

procedures of their lessons, parents are asked to come to school and observe a typical thirty minute session. Afterwards, parents are instructed as to what will be required of them each night when the Reading Recovery book bag comes home. Reading Recovery teachers also write notes, make phone calls, and schedule conferences for parents at various times during the school year. At the end of instruction, parents are routinely asked to fill out questionnaires (See Appendix B), which solicit their opinions as to the value and quality of the program.

Many studies published concerning the efficacy of the Reading Recovery program frequently include the results of this parent questionnaire. However, few researchers employ any additional means to discover the depth of parent contentment or disapproval of this program. The three studies which follow attempt to enhance knowledge of the parent / school connection by the use of participant observation and interview:

Kathleen E. Holland (1987) looked at home-school communication between Reading Recovery teachers and the parents of children served in the program. To do this she visited thirteen families four different times during the school year. Through interviews, field notes, questionnaires, literacy samples, and checklists, she gathered information about family literacy events and parent opinions of the Reading Recovery Program. Teachers involved with children in the program were also interviewed.

Her data revealed two styles of communication used by the seven teachers included in the study. Teachers tended to be either "active" or "passive" as they communicated with parents. Active teachers used a variety of ways to communicate with parents and pursued them relentlessly. Passive teachers used formal letters and gave up easily when parents did not respond.

Active teachers made sure that parents were invited to school to witness a

lesson. Holland reports that:

The Reading Recovery lesson observation involving collaboration among parent, teacher, and child was one of the most powerful impacts upon parents in this study. Another powerful impact was the teacher's style of communication because the active teachers were far more successful than (*sic*) passive teachers in obtaining parent participation in both children's literacy development as well as the Reading Recovery Program. (p.18)

Holland concluded that, if better parent / school cooperation is to be achieved, teachers must take an active lead in obtaining parental participation. Furthermore, teachers must themselves believe that parents are an important ingredient in this equation (p. 19).

Maggie Moore and Barrie Wade (1993), from the University of Birmingham in England, undertook a study to discover the views of parents of Reading Recovery students in New Zealand and in two Australian states. A total of 47 parents (or guardians) were interviewed. All 47 parents were consistently positive about the program (p.12). They reported that parents wanted to be involved with helping their children and that they wanted to do so in the correct way (p.13). Parents reported that they took their role seriously and were committed to spending time reading with their child. The researchers reported that parents felt that their children's attitudes to reading had changed as the children experienced greater and greater success (p.14).

Nearly all of the parents we spoke to referred specifically to their children's increased self confidence. Many did not restrict their comments to reading and writing but broadened their observations:

I think it's been very beneficial to Amy/ she was shy and lacked confidence/ since she's done the programme she's come on in leaps and bounds (Amy's grandmother, Vic.)

and compared their children to how they were before they entered the

programme:

before Reading Recovery Chris had lost all his confidence/ he didn't want to read/ or write/ he'd lost all desire to learn/ in a short space of time when he realised/ he could read/ his confidence increased/ he just bubbled/ I can do it/ I can do it/ and just sort of spread into other areas (NSW) (p.15)

Parents noticed that their children were more willing to take risks when reading and were becoming independent readers. They also commented on the increased amount of time their children spent in reading (p. 15).

In general sessions, parents talked about other members of their family or friends who were not able to participate in the Reading Recovery program. They felt that the program made a marked difference in reading abilities (p.16). Parents recommended Reading Recovery for children experiencing reading difficulties and expressed concern for children who could not receive this special help because of funding problems (p.16).

In their book *Bridges to Literacy*, DeFord, Lyons, and Pinnell (1991) devote a chapter to the home / school connection of the Reading Recovery program. For one year, Kathleen E. Holland studied the family literacy experiences of children in different schools in Ohio. She visited thirty-five families at home and interviewed seventeen parents four times during the school year (pp. 150-151).

Through her research, Holland found that all children received various kinds of support from family members in reading and writing activities. She identified the following eight supporting roles: (1) *models* - children witnessed family members engaged in literacy activities, (2) *providers* - reading and writing materials were available to children, (3) *readers* - family members who would read various type of print to children, (4) *spellers* - family members who would spell for children, (5)

listeners - family members who would listen to children read, (6) *scribes* - family members who would write for children (7) *receivers* - younger children in the family who "received" the benefit of newly acquired reading skills from Reading Recovery readers, (8) *interpreters* - children were given back messages written in invented spelling and asked to interpret. (pp. 153-154).

Holland also found that while most families owned children's books it was the Reading Recovery books which the children read independently at home.

...the Reading Recovery book became a literacy tool that drew the whole family together to support the young reader's need to share reading. Even when parents or other family members were busy or preoccupied, children demanded reading time. They learned not to tolerate distractions from reading. Other family activities had to stop and the listeners were expected to concentrate on the books and to draw physically closer to the children. Children insisted, at times to the point of tears, that listeners comply with their desire to read. Even when no one was available, children read the books to themselves or to dolls, stuffed animals, and family pets. (p.157)

Parents expressed delight with their children's reading. Because the books were easy to read, parents noticed the fluency, expression, and attention to punctuation used by their children while reading (p.159).

Of some concern to the researcher, was the fact that when Reading Recovery lessons stopped and books were no longer sent home, home reading activities decreased. When the books, which were the family's consistent resource were removed, nothing replaced them (p.158). Holland concluded that parents should be encouraged to continue read aloud activities with their children even though the children have reached a certain level of independence and that teachers should continue to offer support when the Reading Recovery program is discontinued (p. 166).

Much has been written about the Reading Recovery program, what it is, what it does for children, how it compares with other programs, etc. However, very little has been written from the perspectives of the families involved. Parent voices have been noticeably absent from the books and journal articles. Does it not make sense to ask the recipients of this service their views and opinions? It is the attempt of this paper to do just that. It is the aim of the researcher to add a small bit of knowledge to this vast ocean of research dealing with Reading Recovery. It is her belief that the more opinions voiced, the clearer, the richer, and the more trustworthy data surrounding this program will appear.

CHAPTER II

Methodology

The Population

Hazelwood Elementary is a large inner city school located in the southeastern part of the United States. There are approximately 550 students registered at this school. Children are from predominately African-American, single parent families. The level of poverty is significant. Over 90% of the students receive a free or reduced lunch. There is a Title I program at Hazelwood which employs five resource teachers. Scores on standardized tests are well below the national average to the extent that the state is threatening to take-over management of the school if scores do not improve.

The Reading Recovery program at Hazelwood was fully implemented during the 1995-1996 school year. During that year a total of 32 children, representing 31 families, were enrolled in the program. Three children did not successfully complete the program and were dropped from service. An additional three children were taken into the program with only a few weeks of school remaining and were still in the program when the regular term ended.

Purpose of the study

Because Reading Recovery is new to Hazelwood Elementary many of the school's teachers, administrators, and parents had a variety of questions regarding the efficacy of the program and the benefits of continuing it at this site. While it is not possible to answer all the questions raised, it is the aim of this research to address one question - What was the measure of satisfaction experienced by parents whose children participated in the program during the 1995-1996 school year?

Procedures

In order to do this, the researcher took a qualitative approach. Initially she sent a letter to the parents of every child served in the program (See Appendix A). The letter introduced the researcher, explained the project, and requested an interview. All parents or guardians who signed and sent back letters were called for an interview.

Feeling that the data base was too small with these few responses, the researcher then called every parent who had failed to return the original letter. Appointments were made and more interviews were conducted. If a parent failed to show up for an appointment, he or she was contacted again and an interview was rescheduled. Depending on the reason, or lack of reason for a second missed appointment, a parent was either called again or was crossed off the list as non responsive. Some parents were simply unavailable. One parent asked to be excluded from the study because she had recently brought home a new baby and was feeling additional stress.

The researcher took the position that every parent whose child had been in the program that year was eligible for an interview. Every attempt was made to contact all parents on the list. No parent or guardian was excluded because his or her child failed to make satisfactory progress in the program.

In addition to letters, personal notes, and phone calls, the aide of classroom teachers was enlisted. The researcher made an appeal to each first grade teacher to encourage parental involvement in the project. The researcher also waited before and after school as children were being delivered and picked up in order to personally contact parents, guardians, uncles, aunts, and other family members. She attended parent teacher conferences, PTA programs, and Honors Day Ceremonies in order to recruit even more parents. In one case, a home-bound parent requested that the interview take place in her home since she was unable to get out of a wheelchair. This

request was easily granted.

Before the actual interview took place the researcher made every attempt to put the parent or guardian at ease. Introductions were made and the research project was explained. Parents were informed that the sessions would be audio taped and that the tapes would be transcribed and then destroyed after the completion of the project. No one objected to any part of the procedure.

Parents were also informed that they could look at the questions beforehand if they wished to do so. One parent asked to see the questions and then quickly discarded them.

Some parents were previously known to the researcher and others were not. While it is a natural assumption that parents who like a teacher would want to please her by giving favorable responses to questions, it is the opinion of the researcher that the informants were sincere in their responses.

With the exception of one grandparent who was visited in her home, all parents came to the school for the interview. Times varied from before school, during school, and immediately after school. A typical interview lasted anywhere from 30 to 45 minutes.

The physical setting for the interviews was in the small but pleasant office of the researcher. The room is divided by bookcases into two spaces occupied by the researcher at the far end and a Title I reading and math teacher near the entrance. At no time was the Title I teacher present during the interviews. Due to lack of space, parents were forced to sit at the small, child size table where daily Reading Recovery instruction normally took place. The researcher sat either beside the parent, if there was only one, or at the teacher's desk directly across, if two parents came for the interview. A small battery operated tape recorder was used to register the conversation.

Although interviews varied, parents and guardians were asked a list of predetermined questions. Additional questions were asked when unexpected or unusual responses occurred. In one case, trouble with the tape recorder caused a part of an interview to be lost. In another case, meeting the needs of an excessively anxious parent led to a somewhat incomplete set of questions to be asked. In general, however, all participants were asked the same questions.

The major research question which guided collection of data was: Did the Reading Recovery Program at Hazelwood Elementary School benefit the children it served as witnessed by their parents?

The following questions were posed to parents:

- How was your child helped?
- Was the homework always completed?
- Was the homework assignment always appropriate? Was it too difficult or too easy?
- Was the length of the assignment always appropriate?
- Did you and your child do the assignment together or did another family member help?
- Did the reading assignments lead to additional books being read in the home?
- Did the reading assignments lead to purchase of additional books of the home?
- Did the reading assignments lead to more books being checked out from the local library?
- What were some of the signs of growth in reading that you observed in your child while he or she was in the program?
- Did your child ask to be read to more frequently while he or she was in the program? Does he or she still make this request?

- If your child has been successfully discontinued from the program does he or he still have an interest in books and in reading? How is this interest shown?
 - Have you noticed any changes in your child which you attribute to the Reading Recovery Program? If so what are they?
- Would you recommend this program for a friend or neighbor whose child was having difficulty with reading? Why or why not?
- Did the Reading Recovery teacher keep you adequately informed as to your child's progress or lack of progress?
 - Did your child like his or her Reading Recovery teacher?
 - Do you have any additional comments you would like to make?

While the above inquiries were the principal questions asked, occasionally a particular response gave rise to a question not previously considered. All attempts were made to transcribe responses accurately and exactly as recorded onto the audio tape.

After five weeks of collecting data the researcher reached a point of saturation. A sufficient number of interviews were taken, (19) and, it became clear that it would be feasible to see only a few additional parents if any.

In addition to the interview, all Reading Recovery parents were asked to fill out a questionnaire (See Appendix B) as their child was dismissed from the program. Their written comments are also included in this paper.

Data Analysis

Recordings were transcribed by the principal investigator and all parties interviewed were given pseudonyms. The responses were then xeroxed and cut apart question by question. All answers to question number one were grouped together, question number two, and so on. Miscellaneous questions and volunteered

comments were grouped separately. Findings are reported question by question.

Because of the researcher's close connection with the Reading Recovery program at Hazelwood Elementary, a conscious effort was made to minimize potential biases. Direct quotations were used often. When sentences were omitted or when a summary of the conversation was recorded, the intention of the speaker was always respected.

CHAPTER III

Results

In this chapter the researcher has included demographic data pertinent to the study. Interview questions have been listed individually, analysis has been made, and typical parent responses have been recorded.

A total of four males and sixteen females were interviewed. Most parents came to the school unaccompanied by a spouse. However, one couple, Mr. and Mrs. Howard, chose to come together. Of the males, three were fathers and one was an uncle who had legal guardianship of his nephew. Of the females, fourteen were biological mothers, one a maternal grandmother, and one a step-mother. All lived within the community surrounding Hazelwood Elementary.

The following is a list of the family members who met with the researcher over the course of a five week period extending from three weeks before school was dismissed at the end of May to the first two weeks of summer school which followed immediately :

<u>Parent or Guardian</u>	<u>Child</u>	<u>Sex</u>	<u>Race</u>
Ms. Jones (MJ)	Sherry	Female	Black
Ms. Compton (MN)	Larry	Male	Black
Ms. Clark (MC)	Matthew	Male	Black
Mr. Black (MB)	Katari	Female	Black
Ms. Eagelton (ME)	Susan	Female	Black
Ms. Green (MG)	DeMontray	Male	Black
Mr. Aimsworth (MA)	Brad	Male	Black
Ms. T. Adams (TA)	LaShawwna	Female	Black

Ms. C. Cramer (CC)	Kitty	Female	Black
Ms. Smith (MS)	Demarcus	Male	Black
Ms. Lewis (ML)	David & Derrick	Males	Black
Ms. Walker (MW)	Jake	Male	White
Ms. Unger (MU)	Dedrick	Male	Black
Ms. A. Bean (AB)	Leslie	Female	Black
M. & M. Howard (MMH)	Milton	Male	Black
Ms. C. Blake (CB)	Charles	Male	Black
Ms. Patton (MP)	Sarah	Female	White
Ms. Kingsley (MK)	Otis	Male	Black
Mr. B. Baxter (BB)	Erin	Female	Black

The questions listed below were asked in numerical order unless circumstances within the conversation precluded this. In the text which follows, the researcher is identified by the letter (I). The three Reading Recovery teachers named in this study are: Mrs. Baker (the researcher), Mrs. Bennington, and Mrs. Cotton.

Question #1: *How was your child helped by the Reading Recovery program?*

A total of 17 parents responded to this question. All but one felt that their child or children had been helped in some way.

Ms. Compton was the one mother who expressed negative opinions throughout the interview. She, however, did not blame the school or the Reading Recovery program. As she explained, she did not expect her child to learn because, "He just don't pick up like the average child." Ms. Compton is waiting placement of her son Larry in special education services for the next school year.

The majority of parents questioned felt that the program had helped their child

become a better reader. They said this in many different ways but the message was clear. A child they cared about and worried about had blossomed before their eyes. They could not have been more pleased:

MJ: She reads much better than she ever read before.

MB: Now she reads, you know. Big words, small words you know. She's really come a long way.

MA: When Brad came to Hazelwood, he couldn't read. Now Brad can read! ... And I've seen him read some books whole. It just amaze me some of the things that he can do. But he has to think. And I think, when he finishes he'll be a perfect reader.

MS: Well, ahumm, when I'm helping him it seems he's reading a whole lot better than he was. And, he would get real frustrated when he couldn't do it but that's changed. He'll try a little harder now. He won't, you know, get as frustrated as quick as he would when he didn't know a word.

MW: Oh yeah! A lot of help! Cause before he came to this program, he couldn't even read. He couldn't even make out the words. But now he can.

MU: Very much so! Derrick read things now that I wouldn't even expect him to read.

MK: Well, in my opinion, trying to read with him at home was kind of stressful. And when Miss Morrison was like, "I'm gonna send him to Mrs. Baker." It helped out a lot. Point blank. I mean it really did! Cause now he's reading perfect! Almost.

MP: Well, When Sarah first started reading, I could see that she wasn't doing very well with her reading. I had to practically read it to her, each word. "What's this word Mommy?" And I was trying to teach her how to sound it out. Then I noticed when she got into this program, that she was reading a lot better. You

know, it was so often that it improved each day and really helped a lot. She can... She reads to me now. I don't read to her any more.

AB: I had talked with Mrs. Cotton and Mrs. Bennington and I just couldn't get her to comprehend like I thought she should be. You know what I'm saying? But, they came out and they talked with me and they told me what to do and I tried doing it. And she still didn't get it like I wanted her to. But once she started going in that Reading Recovery program, everything worked out fine!

Some parents sited a change in self-esteem or excitement about reading as the way the program had helped their child:

MC: I think he was helped. Uhm... It helped his confidence. Self-esteem. It helped him a lot. You know, it helped to bring him out.

I: Was he shy before?

MC: Not really shy, but he was just, you know as far as reading, and you know, academics... He was maybe slow to answer questions. This was something he could do that he was really proud of. You know, it made him feel real good.

I: It made him feel good about himself?

MC: Yeah! It made him feel good about himself. Cause you know, in the Reading Recovery program, he advanced much faster than he would have without it. You know, I think that he would have eventually learned to read well, but I think it helped him to, you know, read well much faster.

BB: Well, she wants to read. She said "Look Daddy!" You know, She can read labels now. She can read. She wants to do it. "I know that word! You know what I mean? And that's very encouraging. Now, I've bought other books for her to read. The *Growler* collection, *Dr. Seusses*, and stuff like that. And she can read those you know. And I see an improvement.

ML: Yeah! They (the twins) enjoy reading more now too. And they sound out the words out. If they don't know it they sound letter by letter. And put it together, you know. They do that good now. And the main thing is they enjoy reading!

AB: It was the best thing that ever happened to Leslie... But, once she started going in that Reading Recovery program, everything worked out fine! She came home, she was excited. ...She was interested. She tried to teach me.

You know what I'm saying? She really tried to teach me! And it was just wonderful! Wonderful! It's one of the best programs, you know, that I've ever heard of. Really!

Mrs.H: He got more confidence to reading. He enjoyed it, going every morning you know.

I: Did he talk about going...

Mrs.H: Oh yes! Every day, you know. He had his little bag. He really enjoyed it. I think Mrs. Cotton was his favorite teacher. (Laughter)

Mr. H: It was a household name. Mrs. Cotton.

Mrs. H: Yea. Mrs. Cotton did this. Mrs. Cotton did that. He really enjoyed it.

Some parents spoke of improved school work such as homework and grades:

TA: But, LaShawonna, she was helped also by coming home doing her homework. And she was ... She really got into it.

CC: Yes. I think that it helped her a lot because when she was in day care she was having problems... Once she got in the program, she did great. Her grades started to improve some. She started making A's and B's. So that's good.

Mrs. H: Yes, it helped his grades too. Especially in reading of course.

Mr. H: Right

One grandparent felt that the program had prevented her granddaughter from failing the first grade. Another guardian, an uncle, felt that even though his nephew would soon be tested for special education, the program had been an invaluable help and had even taught him to read:

MA: We've applied for him for special ed. Because of the fact that he's eight. He turned eight yesterday. Which was May 13. Ahum, he's just so behind in a lot of other things that it's gonna take... He didn't have anyone to direct him. He's gonna take... It takes as much help as he can get. And with Mrs. Bennington, Mrs. Cotton and yourself, he has gotten that help. You have been wonderful. And he has begun to read.

Several parents or guardians made reference to "sounding out words." Although this skill is not taught in Reading Recovery classes, it is a term with which most parents are familiar. Reading Recovery students are taught to look for "chunks" within words in order to facilitate decoding. They are also taught to "crash" a word. This technique employs voicing letter sounds and articulating the accumulating letters while retaining the context of the sentence (Clay, 1993; p.47).

Question #2: Was the homework always completed?

Again, with the exception of Ms. Compton, all the parents or guardians answered "yes" to this question. Parents and children placed significant value on the assigned homework, often times centering daily routines around its completion.

Parents also reported that their child actually enjoyed doing the homework, putting it sometimes before opportunities to play. The need to read to their parents was apparently so great that some children requested and got parental cooperation on demand:

MJ: Yes. (Laughter) She'll worry you to death.

I: I was wondering why you were laughing.

MJ: (More Laughter)

I: It sounds like you have a story.

MJ: She gets out of school. And she says, "Momma I have homework and I have to do it right now!" I say, "I'm gonna help you with your homework, only thing I got to do is cook ya'll something to eat. And when I get through..."

"Uhgn-uhgn (No). Right now!" She had to have her homework right now!

I: And you did it with her right then?

MJ: Yes. Cause she was gonna scream and holler and just nag, nag, nag you know. And I couldn't stand it. I said, "We're gonna do this right quick. Just right away!"

I: Sounds like she liked to do her homework.

MJ: Yes she do. She like reading books and stuff.

AB: Every night! first thing before she went outside in the afternoon. She came home with her papers. Read it to get started. And those little cut-outs she used

to have?

I: Right. The cut-up sentence.

AB: She used to come home in the afternoon, and this is the first thing she wanted to do. You understand what I'm saying?

I: Well good.

AB: Really, really, it was the best thing that ever happened!

I: So she was really enthusiastic about the program.

AB: She was! Very much so. Very much so.

Mrs. H: Yeah. He came to us by himself. You know, "I have to read!" You know. And got his bag in his hand. And.....yeah.

Mr. H: Like I say, it's still going on now right when he bring the little books home.

Mrs. H: Every day!

Mr. H: We make sure he read it to us and we read it with him also.

I: Did you do homework every night with him?

MU: Yes.

I: Was that important to you?

MU: Yes it was. My daily routine: I get the kids homework out the way. Get their supper ready and then I get into my studies.

I: Do you think that the homework helped him to be a better reader?

MU: Yes. Yes.

MA: One time we had a problem because I didn't understand how, you remember, how you wanted me to do it?

I: Right. But afterwards...

MA: He knew! He knew! And he told me. So afterwards all of his homework, he knew exactly what to do when he get home. He pulled out his little envelope. He tore his words down and made a sentence and put a period there. And he spaced. And then he wrote the word that you put up under there for him to write across like three or four times.

I: Great! You know it just as well as he does! I can tell!

MA: Yeah! UmHumm.

Several parents reported that the homework was finished before they came home from work. While some caregivers insisted that their child read the book or books again with them, other parents were not concerned with the rereading, seeing the completion of homework as a sign of their child's growing self-reliance:

MC: Yeah. I didn't have to tell him. Well, you know when I come in from work, I always say, "You all done your homework?" And he would have read his book. But of course I had him read it over for me. You know to make sure.

CB: Yes. He's gotten better with doing his homework. Because he has a little folder which he brings home. And he has to do a special assignment from his Reading Recovery class. He's very good about that. He comes home and he gets his book out and goes on and does his homework without me telling him to.

Ms. Lewis, (ML), is the mother of twin boys. She is living with a terminal illness and realizes that she will not always be there for her five young children. Mrs. Lewis's goal is to push the boys toward independence:

ML: Yeah. They did it all most, most of the time. But once I got on them and let them know... They need to be more independent. You understand? Because, I used to guide them around. Now I have to give them more independence. You know, "You have to do this. Bring it to me. I'll check it and I'll sign it."

I: Are they taking their independence? Are they doing it?

ML: They doing it. They doing it.

Mr. Baxter, (BB), a fifty year old Vietnam veteran, talked about his daughter's enthusiasm for doing homework even when she was sick and forced to stay home from school:

BB: But some days she was sick. I say, "You know you've got to do that." You know. So we would make up a sentence. And she would cut it out. You know, Mrs. Bennington liked that because she said, "Oh, thank you for doing that. Even though she was out."

I: That's good.

BB: So she looked forward to that. You know it was that reinforcement. She enjoyed that She really enjoys reading. I mean it's amazing.

Question #3: *Was the homework assignment always appropriate? Was it too difficult or too easy?*

Most parents responded that the homework was appropriate. Even Ms. Compton found no fault with the assignment itself: "No, it wasn't hard. He just couldn't do it." Parents who found the homework challenging realized that the degree of difficulty paralleled their child's developing capabilities:

MC: No. It was like a progressive thing! You know, first he started out with the simpler books. And then he progressed on the reading more complex books.

I: Did you... Do you think that that was a good idea, to progress him from the simpler to the harder books? Or do you think maybe we should have just gone on in there with a hard book?

MC: No. Cause if you started with a harder book and he couldn't do it then that might have made him not wanna try. So I think that it was a good idea to start out with the simpler books.

MB: No. Well, I thought it was hard, but on the other hand, she learned it. Even though I thought it was probably hard. But it was, you know, to her standards.

One mother, whose daughter did not successfully complete the program, found that the reading, was at times, too hard:

TA: Sometimes it was difficult.... LaShawwna, she came home and read to me. I didn't have to read the book first to her. She read it to me. Then, once she read it, I went over it. We... She identified, looked at the pictures and then read the words and went through the book.

One parent said that the homework was too easy, however, she seemed to qualify her statement somewhat by adding that reading the assigned book sometimes caused problems:

MU: Actually I think it was kinda too easy cause it didn't take him no time to complete it. You know?

I: And he read all three books?

MU: All three books every night. Some of the books we had to read three and four time in order for him to really grasp it. But...

Most parents, however, felt that the homework was just about right. The following are typical reactions:

MA: I think that it was appropriate for him along with the readings that you sent home for him to do. And the books were very good. I think it was appropriate. I think it was wonderful.

I: Good.

MA: I think it was on his pace. And it helped him a whole lot. And then another thing, the books that you sent home, the pictures that were in the books... He kinda connected the picture with the words. And then when he sounded his syllables, he got his words.

MK: It's not too hard and it's not too easy. Forming sentences is to me... Is, you know, a grounds for knowing how to read, when to stop at your periods and question marks and so forth and so on. And when he's writing, or when he does Miss Morrison's homework, and he has to write out sentences, he knows when to put a question mark and a comma, and a period and so forth. And I was like, first grade! Amazed, you know. Cause, "You weren't doing this at the beginning of the year!" I don't think it's too hard, you know. I think it's right.

Question #4: *Was the length of the assignment appropriate?*

Parental responses to this question proved interesting. For some, the short amount of time required to complete the homework was appropriate. For others, a longer period of time was not only appropriate, but preferable. Some parents valued the fact that their children could work independently and still others supervised homework vigilantly. Most parents, however, found the amount of time required to complete homework to be about right:

ME: It was about right.

MG: About the right time.

TA: It was okay.

CC: It was just right.

ML: Just about right.

When questioned about the length of time it took for her son Otis to complete his homework, Ms. Kingsley replied that it took an average amount of time:

MK: I guess with a first grader that that would be average time you know. About 15 to 20 minutes. I would make him read the sentence over and over again before he'd put it down on a piece of paper.

I: So you were working with him and that's why it took so long?

MK: Yes

I: But when he read it, as he got into the program, more and more, and he could read a little bit better, did it take quite as long?

MK: No, cause like, I'd ask, "Otis, do you have any homework?" And he'd say, "Yes Momma. Mrs. Baker sent this." I'd say, "Well you gotta go and do it." And he'd say, "Mom," you know, "I'm going outside." And I'd be like, "Where your homework? You did it yourself? Well, okay."

I: So he did get faster?

MK: Yeah.

Mr. Aimsworth, Brad's uncle and guardian, also reported that the homework became progressively easier as his nephew advanced in the program:

MA: When he first began he did (take a long time to finish). But now he does it wonderfully. It's like, he can do your homework in five or ten minutes. But the reading takes time.

However, Jake's mother expressed concern that his homework did not take long enough:

MW: It was okay. They should have given something else instead of... I

mean, that was easier... Some of the times it was too easy.

I: Some times it was too easy?

MW: Yeah. And they should have had something with a little bit more longer of a sentence instead of three or four words at a time.

I: Okay. Longer sentence. Maybe even two sentences. Something like that?

MW: Right.

For Mrs. Clark, Matthew's mother, the opposite was true. Because Matthew was bringing home harder and harder books the length of time required to complete the homework actually increased. This, however, did not seem to be a problem for her. Ms. Patton also reported that the homework took longer than a few minutes:

I: How long did it take her to finish ...?

MP: Different times really. Mostly it might have been half an hour. Depending on what she had to read and how well she could read that certain materials. You know, depending on the time she took.

I: And what about the shortest? What would you say that was?

MP: Fifteen minutes.

I: So, did you think that length was okay?

MP: Yeah. Like I said, you know, with her other work... And then I like to have time for family, you know things.

Question #5: *Did you and your child do the assignment together or did another family member help?*

For the most part, doing the homework assignment turned out to be a family affair. The larger the family, the more people became involved as helpers. Children received assistance from: mothers, fathers, grandmothers, step-mothers, brothers, sisters, cousins, and even neighbors. Many times a parent was away at work during homework time. This caused a caregiver to fill in:

MS: (Mother) When he was with me, I helped him and when he was with my mother, my mother helped him. So we went back and forth.

AB: (Grandmother) I did it because her mother was working at night. Her mother worked at night during that time. Cause she's just on a new job right now. And see, at night, she was going to work at ah... I think it was 2:00 in the afternoon. And she wasn't getting off until 11:30 at night. So I would have to help her with all of her homework.

MP: It was usually me. My husband works 12 hours a day. So he's not really there. And, ah, when he is there, he's resting up. Cause he works from like in the evening to 6:00 in the morning.

I: Wow.

MP: And ah, during the day he sleeps. So mostly, when it comes to education stuff, I'm the one that does that when she needs my help.

Older siblings and cousins also helped. This happened when a parent or guardian was not available, or simply because it was enjoyable for both the child and sibling:

MB: Well, my other daughter would help her too.

I: How old is she?

MB: She's twelve. She would help her with some of her reading. You know, if I didn't feel like letting her read to me, then I would let her read to my twelve year old and she would, you know, get the words or something like that. And some days I would let her read to me and some nights.

I: And you've already answered this question. You do the homework with him sometimes, but sometimes Alice (a cousin) does it?

MA: She's a senior and she helps him with his homework.

I: Is she patient?

MA: Very patient.

I: Good.

MA: And she likes Brad. Brad is one of her favorites. Brad does favors for her so she takes time out with him with his homework.

MW: Sometimes me and Jake, and sometimes he would read to his Daddy. But he would do the work. And then sometimes his brother, he'd want his brother to help him.

I: So it was a family thing.

MW: A family thing.

Question # 6: *Did the reading assignments lead to additional books being read in the home?*

Only one parent responded "no" to this question. Mr. Aimsforth stated that he required his nephew to read only the books sent home in the reading bag because Brad had other assignments to read from his regular class. In the sense that his classwork was additional reading, this might not actually be considered a totally negative response. Later in the interview, Mr. Aimsforth asked the researcher where he could purchase old reading basals. He wanted Brad to have a sufficient quantity of reading material at home for the summer.

Two parents qualified their answer to this question. "Yes," they read additional books at home, however; this was something that they had *always* done. One parent failed to distinguish *her* reading habits from those of *her child* when responding to the question. To her, reading in the home was just that, reading by anyone in the home:

MP: Ah, well, I wouldn't say they lead me to that. See, I read anyway. I've always read anyway. I... a lot of nights, if I can't sleep, or if I'm tired and and just want to sit down and relax, I'll grab a book. And I read books a lot. I like mysteries, novels, things like that.

I: So your children see you reading a lot?

MP: UmHumm (Yes). I read through... I heard about education programs, even when I was pregnant. I read books to the baby while I was pregnant with her.

I: Oh!

MP: So, that might be another reason she... They say if you'll rub your stomach and read, they can hear you. So I did that a lot.

I: That's good. And when she was a little bitty baby, did you continue to read to her?

MP: UmHumm. I'd rock her and read to her. You know, I had a rocking chair that I bought especially for the time when she was supposed to come. And I'd sit in that chair and I'd take a book and I would read to her the nursery rhymes and the lullabies in the book. And I would talk to her when she was a teeny tiny little thing.

MS: Yes. He has always read additional books though. Cause he has a lot of books at home. A lot. I have a lot of books there that he can read. So, when... After he does his homework and read his books that he brings from school, I always have him read another book.

AB: Yes! Yes! Yes! She wanted to read! Really, really wanted to read! And every time, you can ask Mrs. Cotton, every time you see her, she's got something in her hand. A pad or something. If she's not reading she's trying to draw.

Even Ms. Compton responded to the question in the affirmative. Larry, however, was less than cooperative with the additional reading:

MN: Ahum, my daughter read with him.

I: What kind of books did she read?

MN: So he get mad at her when she tell him what's right and what's wrong.

Question #7: *Did the reading assignments lead to the purchase of additional books for the home?*

Of the 19 responses to this question, 3 parents said "no." While the remaining parents indicated that the reading assignments had led to the purchase of additional books, their answers were somewhat equivocal. A close look at some responses could be interpreted to mean that, "yes" parents buy books now as they have done in the past.

I: Well, did you buy any books for Jake because of this (program)?

MW: I get them in the mail. Yes.

I: Oh you do?

MW: The little books. It's the *Teddy Bear Club* or something like that.

I: Okay.

MW: And I get those in the mail for him.

I: Oh, that's good. Does he get one a month?

MW: Yeah. One or two or three at a time.

I: Well, good. What kind of books did you buy?

TA: Ummm. We got started this, *You Can Read* program and all. They sent in different books every month.

I: Is it like, in the mail?

TA: UmHumm. (Yes)

Surprisingly, many parents or guardians (7), reported that they ordered children's books in the mail. Five of these seven parents specifically named the *Dr. Seuss* collection even going so far as to describe the little plastic book shelf which came with the order:

ME: She has a lot of *Doctor Seuss* books.

I: She does? Humm. I'm running into a lot of parents who... How did you find out about the *Dr. Seuss* books? Did somebody here send you something in the mail?

ME: No, actually when I had her in California, like, the hospital had where they send you all these little gift packages and stuff. And they had 8 books for \$1.99 with the free book... set up...

I: With the Cat in the Hat?

ME: UmHumm (Yes). And so, me, I got that. And so that's how I started. That's how I started. It was about seven years ago.

MJ: She got other books and stuff. *Dr. Seuss* books and different stuff like that. Sam I Am, and all those kind a books. You know, I order in the mail.

I: You ordered them in the mail?

MJ: UmHumm (Yes).

I: That's good.

MJ: I got a bunch of them.....(tape problems)...I got a whole rack of them.

A few parents reported that, due to the nightly reading assignments, they were better able to judge appropriate levels of reading for their children. They felt more comfortable picking out books that their child could read on an independent or instructional level:

CB: I know a little bit better what he can read. More so than before. Because, before, I went to the library and I had to ask one of the librarians, what would be appropriate for a first grader just starting to read.

I: Okay. And so she's (his Reading Recovery teacher) still giving him books?
Mrs.H: Yes. She's still giving him books. And he have to turn them back in. He enjoys that. And it helped us to get books for him too. Cause usually we got books he couldn't read really, you know? But when we went to the, you know, bookstore now, we can go by the books the teacher gave him. You know, so it's easier for him to read the books we buy him now. You know.

I: Oh, that's good. I hadn't thought about that.

Mrs.H: Cause before that, we always bought, you know, "Second Steps." Or, I don't know the steps ... You know, for more advanced, you know. Now we know exactly what books to get too.

I: Did the little books that we sent home in the bags, did that help you when you were buying her books in any way?

MB: Yeah, UmHumm.

I: How did that help?

MB: It showed me what books was on her level of reading instead of going out and buying a book that you thought she could read. The books that I saw, from what you sent home, I could go out and buy books. It was easier to buy books for her.

I: Kind of similar books?

MB: Yeah. Similar books like that.

Those parents who did not purchase more books because of the Reading Recovery program reported that they already had a sufficient quantity of books at home for their children to read:

I: What about, did you buy her any more books because of this (program)?

AB: No.

I: No.

AB: No. I have enough books here

I: How many do you have?

AB: Oh, a whole library of books. I've got a lot of books!

I: Would you say that you have over thirty. Thirty or more?

AB: Yeah. I got a lot of books here.

MK: On his behalf, the books that they have at home, and they have a slew of books... He'll pick one up and just start reading and you know, "Mom what's this word?" And I'm like, "Okay son, sound it out." And he'll get it. And I'm like - beautiful! Just beautiful!

MS: I have a lot of books there that he can read.... I haven't purchased any (more) at this time. No.

All parents reported having books or other types of reading materials available in their homes. While "thirty" books seemed to be the benchmark measure of a typical quantity, one parent reported having "thousands" of books at home when you counted his wife's German books. Parents used phrases such as the following to describe the number of books in their homes:

MP: We bought a bunch of books.

Mr.H: Woooooof! I can't even count!

MN: We got a whole collection of *Dr. Seusses*.

MJ: ...she got a lot of books. All kinds of books.

ME: She has 35.

CC: About... approximately 30.

MS: ...I have a lot of books there that he can read.

ML: I have a shelf like this (indicates a large floor to ceiling book shelf). Full of books. I buy them...from the stores. And then, their godmother buys them a lot of books. My social worker buys them a lot of books.

I: Great! How many books do you think you have? Over 30, under 30?

ML: Oh God! Over 50!

Question # 8: *Did the reading assignments lead to more books being checked out from the local library?*

Surprisingly, the answer to this question was a resounding "no!" While parents found it easy to purchase books while they were out shopping at "...K-Mart or Wal-Mart or something," they did not find it convenient to visit the local library. This could, in part, be due to the fact that the community library, just across the street from the school, had been closed for renovations for months. The "temporary" library, set up several blocks away, may not have been as visible or as accessible. Only one parent responded with an unqualified "yes" to this question:

CB: We go to the library often. Probably once or twice a week and check out books. And he reads them.

Mrs. Unger, herself a nursing student, took her children there often:

I: What about trips to the library, did that increase?

MU: Yes it did. Well, we usually always go to the library cause I'm always in the library studying so....

I: Right. So you could take both of them (children) with you.

MU: Right.

Some of the more qualified answers include the following:

MA: We have library cards. We will be going to the library this summer.

ME: Yeah. We got library cards for the library right here across the street.

I: About how often do you go a month?

ME: We haven't went in a while.

TA: Well, we went to the library. But we didn't go on a regular basis.

Some parents made excuses for their failure to visit the library. It was the researcher's opinion that by tone of voice, body language, or some other slight manifestation, these parents realized that going to the library was something which should be done in order to improve their child's reading skills:

MC: No. We didn't get a chance to go to the library a lot, you know, because of my work schedule.

MB: Well, she had started going to the library, but when my job changed, she really didn't have time to go. But she was going to the library over here after school.

MS: We talked about it but we haven't done it yet. Which is my fault but...

AB: I didn't. (AB is in a wheelchair) But her mother talk with her last night about going to the library when she's off. On this job she's got now she can go to the library with her. So they gonna start going to the library about twice a week.

MP: I don't go to the library much because I've been sick for a long time. I'm not well yet. And I don't get out much.

Mrs.H: No. We just moved here not too long ago. And so...

I: You don't have a card yet?

Mrs.H: No.

MG: Not yet.

The remaining parents simply see the purchase of books and their availability within their households as sufficient for their child's literary development:

MJ: No. I just go to the store or something.

ML: I buy them.

Question #9: *What were some of the signs of growth in reading that you observed in your child while he or she was in the program?*

The responses to this question were varied. Frequently, more than one example of growth was conveyed in a single reply. Parent answers have been coded and ranked from most cited to lest:

- Child became a better reader (more independent, more fluent, better at comprehension, etc.) There were sixteen responses which fit this category. A few are presented below:

MJ: She was reading.... excellent! You know cause Sherry couldn't read like that until she started going to see the lady. She wasn't reading like that at all. You know, she was just reading real good.

MB: And her overall, just opening a book and reading the words without help.
I: It had meaning?

MB: Yeah, it had meaning to it. She could open a book and just go to read and knew what she was reading.

MS: You know, because it seemed like it was so hard to him. But it's kinda easier for him now.

MK: When Miss Morrison would send his homework packet, he used to ask me all the time, "Momma read this to me." Now, he don't need me to read instructions or anything and I think that is so wonderful! That he doesn't rely on me to read. Like I told him, your teachers won't always be there to read to you. You need to do it yourself. When you're with Mrs. Baker again, if you don't understand something, ask her.

I: So you think he's more independent?

MK: Yeah! EXACTLY! Yeah! EXACTLY!

MP: Like I said before, she just was reading better. She showed an improvement that way. etc.

- Child wanted to read more (engaged in more reading, read environmental print, enjoyed reading, etc.). There were seven responses which fit this category.

Among them are as follows:

I: And (she) started reading more boxes?

MB: More boxes, yeah. I would go to the store and might buy a cereal box.

And it usually had like some... whatever the prize you get in the box. And she would (go) over and read that. Or either, she would, when the mailman comes, she would get the mail and from that... Well, I knew she had learned something by then. Because, she would get the mail and she could separate it. She could separate mine from my Mom's and hers. You know, she got an older brother that lives there too and she knows everybody name you know. Without asking well, "Whose is this?" like she used to. Now she can just... "I know this is Mommy now. This is Daddy now. And this is my brother."

I: And do you think that she did this because of the program?

MB: Yeah.

TA: Well, she come home. She do her homework. And me and she'll get through with her homework, and she'll pick up another book...

I: So you think that because LaShawwna would go to another book on her own, that that was a good sign.

TA: Yes. Yes.

MS: And he's more enthusiastic about it now. He wants to... It's like he wants to learn. I mean, before it was like, he didn't really care whether he read or not!

ML: Cause I took them to the doctor yesterday. They had to go to Children's Hospital. You know how Children's Hospital always got a lot a little books around? They grabbed them and read all of them!

I: That's good.

ML: So you know, and I liked that

I: What about when you're driving on the street and they see a sign. Do they try to read the sign?

ML: Yep!

I: And in the grocery store?

ML: Yep! Even try to read a tag on the car. (Laughter)

-Child attended better to print (decoded words better, faster, etc.).

Once again parents referred to this skill as "sounding out words." Seven responses related to this aspect of their child's reading ability:

ME: She was paying attention a lot more in reading. And learning how to read by the pictures and stuff.

MA: Him being able to sound out syllables. Him being able to read.

MS: I mean when he doesn't know a word he'll break it down and you know, try to figure it out.

ML: Sounding out each letter and putting them together.

I: They didn't really have to ask you as much for the words?

ML: No. They knew the sounds they made.

-Child had an improved sense of self-esteem (better attitude, enthusiasm, better discipline, more maturity etc.).

Five parents mentioned the above factors in their answers:

ML: And, it... It changed them. (The twins)

I: It did?

ML: Yeah

I: How did it change them?

ML: More... More self-esteem.

I: Wow.

ML: You know, they got that - "I can do it!" And... and... and, I like that.

I: UmHumm.

ML: It ain't that, "I can't read." It's like they had contests - "I can read better than you." And it makes them all (siblings also) eager to read more and more. And that's what I like.

I: You noticed a difference in their attitude then. Were they... Did they not like reading before the program?

ML: Well, before the program, you know how children is, they don't like it because they can't do it. Now that they can do it, they like it!

I: And because they like it they'll read more.

ML: That's what I'm saying. That's what I'm saying. Cause they constantly - all the time reading.

MW: He was more exciting about it (reading). Used to he didn't even want to do that. But now it's like an ego. "Hey, I can do this!" You know?

MC: Well, one thing that I noticed, when he was in the Reading Recovery program, he was well, a better student. Cause I guess he had that one-on-one contact with the teacher every day. You know, he knew that was his time. And that made him feel special. But it seemed like shortly after that, you know, after the program was over, he would tend to act up more in class. We had to work on that together. It may not be completely under control.

MS: And he's more enthusiastic about it (reading) now.

BB: She... she... she umm, seems like she became a little bit more mature. A little. You know, a little more. She became a little bit more responsible.

-Child became a better student.

There were two such references:

MB: Her grades. Her worksheets.

MC: ...he was a better student.

-Child developed a larger vocabulary and enhanced spelling abilities.

Three parents mentioned vocabulary or spelling as an indication of growth:

MB: ...she can read more words and bigger words.

ME: And she knew some of the words.

MC: And then in his spelling too. It helped him to... He would always try to spell the words. Even if he didn't spell them right. He would spell them you know, the way they sounded. You know, when he was writing. So I think that helped him a lot too.

Question #10: *Did your child ask to be read to more frequently while he or she was in the program? Does he or she still make this request?*

Of the eighteen parents who responded to this question, fifteen said "no" and only three said "yes." At first glance this may seem surprising, however, for children who have recently mastered a new skill, happiness comes from being able to showcase that ability with those who matter most, the family. Even adults who responded affirmatively stated that the reading time went both ways, that is, both child and parent did the reading.

Ms. Compton's account of attempts to read to Larry was troubling:

MN: No ma'am. He don't want to read. He'd just rather clean up or something.

I: He doesn't even want you to read to him?

MN: No. Cause he gonna tell you it's wrong. You ain't saying it right. And he get angry at you.

I: Oh, I see. Okay.

MN: So you have to just let him have his way.

I: Okay.

MN: He'll just fall and hit his head. And I'll have to take him back to Children's.

So mostly, I just let him have his way. Cause he usually fall out and knock big gashes in his head.

I: Does he fall down a lot?

MN: Yeah. A whole lot! When he get mad, he just fall out in the floor now.

I: Okay. He just kind of has a temper problem?

MN: Yeah. Oooooooo! Rough!

I: Okay.

MN: I get fed up with him and I spank him you know. I whip him. I don't spank him. (Laughter) It don't do no good.

The vast majority of responses, however, were positive. Family members seemed genuinely proud of their son or daughter's accomplishment in learning to read. They verbally emphasized the fact that because the child could now read, reading aloud to parents was an experience highly valued by both parties:

MC: No. He wanted to read himself more. (Laughter)

I: So he got more independent?

MC: Yeah! He got more independent.

MB: Yeah. She wanted to read more. And when she got into the program, I believe that she was more frustrated because she couldn't read by somebody reading to her. You know, because, she wanted to do it herself, you know. And so, after she got into the program it became, she became more (in)dependent herself. That she was going to be determined to learn how to read so she could read herself. So now she like to read to me, you know, and my wife. And now she reads the funny paper. Which ... she had never done that. You know, and now she ask... that she want the funny paper. And she reads it.

MA: But now, he wants to do it on his own.

ML: They (the twins) wanted to read to me more.

MW: He would want to read to me!

AB: Yes! Yes! She want to read to me more. Sometimes I be doing something

else you know. "Grandmamma I gotta... I just want to show you this! I just want to show you this! I want to read this! 'Sally said something and Jane said...'"

MP: She don't feel like having somebody read to her. She'll read by herself. And the only time I ever help her is when she can't figure out a word.

When parents responded "yes" to this question, a kind of half and half strategy emerged:

I: Does he ask for you to read to him more now?

MS: YES!

I: Okay. You say that like you mean it. A whole lot more?

MS: Ah Humm (Yes)! He want to read to me a whole lot more too!

BB: Ah... I think she wanted to read to me. And visa versa really. She read and I read, you know, more.

I: Okay. Ahum... Did she ask you to read to her more often when she was in the program?

ME: She sure did.

I: What about her reading to you? Did she want you to listen to her read?

ME: Yes. She wanted me to listen to her read a page. And then I read a page

I: Did the teacher suggest that or is that just something she wanted to do?

ME: No. That's just something she wanted to do.

I: She just wanted to read a page and then you read a page.

ME: Yea. Well, we do it mandatory anyway.

Question #11: *If your child has been successfully discontinued from the program, does he or she still have an interest in books and in reading? How is this interest shown?*

Because not all children had successfully finished the program at the time of this interview, the number of responses (13) was somewhat smaller. Nine parents

answered with a positive response. Based on what they were experiencing at home during that time, they believed that their children would always enjoy reading. Three parents felt more tentative. These parents uttered the same three words: "I hope so." The last parent chose to ride the fence, describing her son's interest as, "Kinda in-between."

Question #12: *Have you noticed any changes in your child which you attribute to the Reading Recovery Program? If so what are they?*

There were seventeen parent answers to this question. Once again they were varied and many faceted. Responses are reported by rank order from greatest to least mentioned. Changes noted by parents and guardians deal with observed improvement in academic skills as well as shifts in psychological well being, motivation, and maturity. Parents sometimes mentioned more than one aspect of change when addressing this question:

-Child engaged in reading more frequently (wanted to read).

Seven parents made mentioned of the above:

MG: He, ummm, well he's... sometimes he wanna read the books. And that's a change in him. Because at first he didn't.

MK: Other than his independence and him wanting to read all the time. I mean constantly. This boy was up until 11:30 last night reading. And I was like, "Otis, didn't I tell you to go to bed?" I went in his room and the light was, the little lamp light was shining on. "Otis, didn't I tell you to go to bed?" "Mama, I'm just trying to finish reading." "Never mind baby you can read it later."

I: Awww.

MK: But you know, I thought that was so cute!

-Child became happier with school in general / improved self-esteem.

Six parents made reference to this happening with their child:

BB: Well, see, now she likes to go to school.

MW: I know he's more eager to come to school now.

I: Oh that's a good sign.

MW: Because when he first started he was having problems at he beginning.

I: Right.

MW: And now, he was up and ready wanting to go. He was just real excited.

MB: (Tape problems - here he spoke at length about his daughter's depression) ... my wife used to read to her, but it always made her depressed because she couldn't (read). Because she's always been a child who wanted to do for herself. Like her first bicycle she got. She didn't know how to ride it but she wanted me to take the training wheels off of it...

I: She sounds like she likes to do things by herself.

MB: Yeah.

I: So, she was depressed because she couldn't (read) and she was happier when she could?

MB: Yeah

I: Well that makes sense.

MB: And then on top of that, the other children in the class could read. And that made her more depressed. You know that....? (oc - MB looked at me with sad eyes as if to check that I understood the depth of his feelings)....Yeah! (oc - with a sigh)

I: I sure do. She must feel pretty good about herself right now!

MB: UmHumm (Yes)! (Laughter) Yeah. She enjoy reading too. She reads everything.

-Child's reading improved

This was mentioned by five parents or guardians:

MJ: Well before she even got in the program she was reading them *Dr. Seuss*. She was reading anyway. But she wasn't reading that good until she got in the program.

AB: I was expecting her to do well. And she did good! Do you know what I'm saying? And I'm very pleased with the program. VERY PLEASED WITH IT! Because I just couldn't do it! (Teach her to read).

I: And you had tried?

AB: I had tried! I had tried!

-Child became more mature.

BB: She, she, like I say - responsible.

MP: Intelligence.

I: Oh really. That's interesting.

MP: ...and she's learned to express her words more "adultly" than baby talk.

That's I call intelligence. She's learned to talk intelligently. She's a very smart girl.

MW: He thought he was big. He was growing up.

Two parents mentioned that their - child's behavior at school had improved.

Single mention was made of the following:

- child does homework without being asked to do so.
- child reads to siblings.
- child exhibits improved writing and vocabulary.

Question # 13: *Would you recommend this program for a friend or neighbor whose child was having difficulty with reading? Why or why not?*

There were sixteen parent responses to this question. All answered "yes."

Many did so with great emphasis and feeling:

MC: Most definitely! I think all students should go through this.

MU: Yes. Yes. Yes.

MK: Most definitely!!!!!! (oc - With much feeling)

When parents answered the second part of this question they usually reported that since the program had helped their child it could help others:

MS: Because, I mean, it has helped my child. I see the changes it brought in him. And I think that... I mean... If the teacher works toward it, and the parent helps that... It can make a big improvement in the child. And everybody (oc - with emphasis) need to know how to read!

Question #14: *Did the Reading Recovery teacher keep you adequately informed as to you child's progress or lack of progress?*

There were seventeen responses to this question. All parents and guardians reported that they had been kept adequately informed of their child's progress.

Question # 15: *Did your child like his or her Reading Recovery teacher? Did you?*

There were also seventeen responses to this question. One hundred percent of those responding indicated that both they and their child liked the Reading Recovery teacher:

I: Sounds like you and the teacher had a really good relationship.

BB: I think so.

I: Did Erin like her?

BB: Loved her! Loved her!

Question # 16: *Do you have any additional comments you would like to make?*

All nineteen parents responded to this question. Two parents had nothing further to add to their interview. The remaining responses can be placed into four categories. Once again they are reported in rank order from greatest to least mentioned response:

-Gratitude.

Ten parents or guardians used this time to say thank you to the teachers and the system for implementing and providing the Reading Recovery program:

MS: I'm just glad that my child got a chance to take part in this program, and that it's at his school for him to take - have this opportunity to, you know, do it. And that someone is willing to be with him and to help him learn to read and do better.

MW: I appreciate him being in the program though, It helped him a lot. It made me feel good to know that someone was interested in helping him. Because when I went to school, nobody was there for us. And I can't read that good. And I was in Special Ed. classes and all. But, this made me feel good to know that somebody cares about your kids.

MK: I'm glad, though, like I told Miss Morrison. If it hadn't been for you. I mean, because I used to beat my head on the wall. Just beat my head on the wall. "Otis, please baby! Please, please, please, please!" And I told Miss Morrison, "Miss Morrison, if it hadn't been for Mrs. Baker, I don't know what I would of did."

-Child was helped to become a better reader.

Six parents mentioned this as an additional comment:

MA: Because he couldn't read when he started in the fall.

AB: I'm so proud of Leslie. She didn't have to go to summer school.

CB: I want to say that it is helping Charles a lot.

MP: No. Just that I think Sarah's doing really well. I think she's improved.

MB: Yeah. You know, the program really helped her out. You know, basically, overall it helped her. Seemed like with everything. You know. Everything she do she has to read.

-Reading Recovery is a good program.

Eight parents commented on the efficacy of the program. They not only felt that the program was a good one, they expressed hopes that it would continue to help other children. A couple wanted their child to continue in the program through second grade. One parent, Ms. Clark, was able to see how her son's learning had been accelerated while he was in the program:

MC: Just that I think it's a good program. And when Matthew started to school, I was really kinda worried about him. Cause, you know, I would teach him, but you know, seems like it was kinda hard for him to catch on. But with the Reading Recovery program, he learned at a much faster pace. And I think it's good for that reason.

ME: It's a good program and I hope that she can continue it when she comes back (after summer vacation).

MJ: No, I hope it continues. You know for other people and stuff like that. And that they don't cancel the program or nothing like that. Because it helps children very well. Yeah it does. It's a very good program.

- Child's self esteem improved.

Two parents commented on this. Once again Mr. Black returned to the subject of his daughter's depression and how the Reading Recovery program had helped her:

MB: Like I say, from overall she, you know, started reading. She just took a total change. You know, from being depressed to being... Because that was the main problem. That's why she didn't want to go ... to come to school. Because, some mornings she used to tell me, she used to say, "Daddy, I don't want to go to school." I say, "Why?" She say, "I don't like school." That was because she was embarrassed by the other kids knowing how to read you know. Cause that's all she used to say you know. "I don't want to go to school." I'd say, "Why?" And she told me one day that everybody in her class can read except her, you know. So I said, "You gonna learn how to read one day." And so now, she never says that she don't want to go to school.

I: And that's a big change in her isn't it?

MB: UnHunnn (Yes)! Like I said it took a total change in her.

ML: You know. And they just enjoy reading more, you know, (more) now than they did. Cause they know they're accomplishing. And they can do it! And they know how to do it. So that's the best thing.

As parent enthusiasm for the Reading Recovery program became evident to the researcher, another question presented itself. The Reading Recovery program existed in only four schools of a large urban system. What did parents think about increasing this number? If they could voice their opinions to the school board, what would they say about expanding the program? The question was usually asked in the following words:

Question # 17: *You know, we only have this program in four of our schools. We have*

over 50 elementary schools in the system. What would you say to the people downtown? Do you think that they should put this program in more schools?

Fifteen parents responded. One hundred percent of those responding felt that the program should be in all elementary schools in the system. They felt strongly that if a program existed that could help children learn to read, it should be implemented in all schools:

MC: I think it should be in all schools. There are always gonna be some children who excel faster than others. But there are children who can't. It's an excellent program.

ME: It ought to be in all schools. Because somewhere, I mean in every school, there is a child that needs this program. Because it is some kids like my child, for instance, that is slow in learning. And so I believe it should be in all programs.

MG: The whole system!

CC: More programs like this. Cause it increased her grades. I liked that. And her spelling too.

MS: Yes! In every school I think they need to have a Reading Recovery program.

MW: I think all the schools should have it. I really do. Because there's a lot of little kids out there that's got parents who can't read. That can't help 'em. But this would really help 'em.

AB: WHAT!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!! Only four!

I: Yes ma'am. It's new. Do you think that they should have them in more

schools?

AB: Oh yes! It would help if it was at EVERY school! EVERY school! Cause there are some children just can't get it you know. I mean some child need more attention than the others.

I: That's right.

AB: You hear what I'm saying! And in this Reading Recovery program, you can give that one child that doesn't get it. Cause there are a lot of parents just don't give it to the children like they're supposed to at home. You know what I'm saying? And see, you can help that child. Cause that's why you're teaching. Why you're in the profession. Cause you want to help somebody else. You know what I'm saying? And so I think that EVERY school should have this. EVERY school!

MK: Four of the city schools?

I: UmHumm (Yes).

MK: That's a shame.

I: Do you think it ought to be in more?

MK: It ought to be in all of them.

The Parent Survey

At various times during the school year children discontinued from the Reading Recovery program. At this time, or at the end of the school year, parents were asked to complete a written survey (See Appendix B). A total of 11 surveys were collected from the 30 sent out to parents. This represented a return rate of 37% (families in the program only a few days were not surveyed). Many of the parents who responded to the survey also came to the school to be interviewed, a few, however, did not.

The survey is a copy of a standard form used by many school districts across the country. On it parents are asked to write brief answers to three questions and to rank the program on a scale from "1", (not a very good program) to "5", (a very good program). Provisions are made for additional comments.

While the number of returned surveys was disappointing, and may not be

representative of all families involved in the project, parent comments were very positive. The Reading Recovery program received an overall ranking of "4.9" on a "5.0" point scale.

The following comments are representative of those made by parents and guardians:

- To me she's reading much better than before. Her vocabulary has increased.
- I'm glad that Mrs. Bennington was able to help my daughter, and I don't think my daughter will ever forget her.
- I wish they would keep it up. Not just for my children, but all that need it. It can help I know.
- The program has helped my child greatly in less than a year's time. She is more confident, and attempts to learn on her own.
- Reading Recovery have improved Milton's vocabulary, speech and attitude toward reading and school.
- The people that are helping my child is great. Because some words he didn't know - now he knows them. That's real good.
- This program is the greatest, it has improve my daughter grades in reading.
- I am extremely proud of what the program has done for Brad... Excellent program.
- Thank you very much for letting my child have a part in the reading program.

Although Reading Recovery is new to Hazelwood Elementary, parents seem to like the program and want it to continue. They feel that it has helped their child and, therefore, it can help other children. Parents and guardians appear to be excited about the program. In this paper their enthusiasm has found a voice.

CHAPTER IV

Summary, Conclusions, Recommendations, and Further Questions

Summary

This study had the following purpose: To discover the level of satisfaction experienced by parents whose children participated the the Reading Recovery program at Hazelwood Elementary School during the 1995-1996 school year. To accomplish this, the researcher conducted 19 interviews and reviewed 11 parent questionnaires.

Several attempts were made to interview all 31 parents of Reading Recovery students whose children were involved in the program this school year. The researcher was able to only interview the parents of 19 students. Because of this, it is impossible to state that the opinions expressed in this document are unanimously representative of all Reading Recovery parents. However, it is accurate to assume that a majority of the target population were pleased with the program at Hazelwood and wished to see it expanded to other sites.

Conclusions

The conclusions reached in this paper are based on responses to the questions asked in the interviews, and the results of the parent questionnaires. Since this is the first year of full implementation of the Reading Recovery program at Hazelwood Elementary School, additional studies should be conducted to ensure that results remain constant. Also, because it is a qualitative study, generalization of these results cannot be made to a larger population.

1. Parents felt that their children had been helped by the Reading Recovery program at Hazelwood. The one dissenting parent stated that her child needed special education and did not feel that the Reading Recovery program was to blame for her son's failure.

2. Parents reported that Reading Recovery homework was always or almost always completed at home. While two felt that the assignments were too easy for their children, the majority of parents felt that the homework was appropriate in length and level of difficulty. Most parents completed the assignments with their children. When this was not possible, surrogates such as grandparents or siblings took over this role. Both children and parents viewed the homework as important. In some cases, the Reading Recovery work became the priority event of the evening.

3. Contrary to popular thought pertaining to the lack of books in poor households, parents in this study provided their children with trade books and other reading materials. While the estimate of books within each household varied, the average amount mentioned was around 30+ books. The majority of these books were purchased for the child or given as gifts. No attempt was made to determine the appropriateness of these books for the children in the program. While parents stated that the books were "read" by their children, the researcher did not investigate to discover if this reported "reading" extended beyond looking at the pictures. She also failed to inquire about whether the books were read aloud or silently.

4. Parents, for the most part, stated that they did not take their children to the library although many planned to do so in the future.

5. Parents reported that they were reading more with their children as a result of the Reading Recovery program. Since participating in the program, however, emphasis had shifted from parent reading to child to child reading to parent. Parents saw this as a positive sign of growth in their child.

6. Parents were able to evaluate their child's reading progress as he or she advanced through the program. Most parents stated that their child had become a better reader as a result of Reading Recovery. They talked about their child becoming more independent, more fluent, and better at reading comprehension. Several commented on an improved reading and speaking vocabulary. Many parents also spoke of the joy with which their child now approached reading and an increase in the number of books read.

7. Most parents reported that, after beginning the Reading Recovery program, their child either: performed better in school, received better grades, exhibited improved discipline, matured, and/or in general felt better about himself or herself. For some, this occurred within weeks of starting the program. For others it began when the child realized that reading was a skill he or she would now be able to master.

8. Some parents believed that their child had also become a better writer.

9. All parents interviewed stated that they would recommend the Reading Recovery program to friends or neighbors whose child was having difficulty in reading.

10. One hundred percent of those interviewed felt that their child's Reading Recovery teacher had kept them adequately informed as to their child's progress or lack of

progress.

11. All parents reported that both they and their child liked their Reading Recovery teacher.

12. Parents were grateful to the teacher for providing the individual help for their child, and to the school system for funding the program. They saw Reading Recovery as a manifestation of someone caring for their child and expressed the concern that other needy children be afforded the same opportunity. When asked directly if the program should be expanded to include all elementary schools within the district, one hundred percent of the parents polled responded with an emphatic "yes."

13. Some parents expressed the belief that, had Reading Recovery been available for their older children, the program would have prevented placement of their children in special education classes. One parent reported that, although she herself had been a special education student and a poor reader, the materials sent home each evening had helped to improve her reading skills. The fact that she was capable of improving at all, gave her hope for the future.

14. Prior to their entry into the Reading Recovery program, some parents had tried unsuccessfully to help their child improve his or her reading skills. Some were frustrated by their inability to help their child learn to read. Others expressed concern and anxiety over their child's academic abilities in the area of reading. Some feared failure and retention. These parents credited the Reading Recovery program with helping their child become a better reader and in some cases preventing failure.

When the researcher undertook this paper, an extensive review of the literature

revealed only three similar studies: Holland (1987), Holland (1991), and Moore & Wade (1993). A phone call to Carol A. Lyons at Ohio State University confirmed the lack of research in this area.

A comparison of the aforementioned studies and this research paper reveals some analogous findings. Like Moore & Wade, this researcher concluded:

- parents were consistently positive about the program
- parents wanted to help their children and took their role seriously
- parents had spent time helping their children
- parents felt their children's attitude toward reading had changed for the better
- parents felt that their children had become better readers
- parents noticed more risk-taking and more independence
- parents commented on the increased amount of time their children spent reading
- parents talked about members of their family who were not able to participate in the Reading Recovery program
- parents recommended Reading Recovery for children experiencing reading difficulties and expressed concern for children who could not receive these services

As in Holland's (1991) study, this researcher could identify several models of home support from family members. From the interviews conducted at Hazelwood Elementary five of Holland's roles emerged: (1) *models* - adults who actively read in the household, (2) *providers* - adults who supplied children with literacy materials, (3) *readers* - family members who would read various types of print to children, (4) *spellers* - family members who would spell for their children, (5) *listeners* - family members who would listen to children read, and (6) *receivers* - younger, and sometimes older non-readers, who "received" the benefit of newly acquired reading

skills from the Reading Recovery child.

Finally, in a prior study of parents and teachers, Holland (1987), found either "active" or "passive" Reading Recovery teachers. The "active" teachers appeared to be more successful in communicating with parents. From this perspective, all three Hazelwood Reading Recovery teachers could be classified as "active." Of the Hazelwood parents interviewed, all but two had witnessed a lesson or attended a parent meeting. All three teachers had aggressively pursued parents with personal notes, phone calls, conferences, or home visitations. This "relentless" pursuit of parents may have been a contributing factor to the high regard with which parents and guardians held these three teachers.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on the results of this research study. They are presented from the perspective of parents who have been witnesses to the achievement of their children in the areas of reading and writing:

1. Reading Recovery is a successful program that should be continued at Hazelwood Elementary School.
2. The Reading Recovery program should be expanded from the four "pilot" schools to include all elementary schools within the city system.
3. Follow up studies on parents and children should be conducted to affirm continued high regard for the program.
4. This study should be duplicated at each of the four Reading Recovery sites within the school system.
5. Because of the paucity of similar studies concerning the attitudes of parents, this research should be replicated in other school systems.

Further Questions

As in most research, additional questions arise. A closer look needs to be taken to determine the influence of Reading Recovery books on the family literacy experience. Also relevant, would be a study to determine, as several parents have suggested, the effects of the Reading Recovery program in preventing a child's placement in special education programs. And finally, since parents are their child's first teachers and most dedicated advocates, their voices must find a sounding board. More and more research must actively search them out and allow their opinions and observations to find a platform and be heard.

REFERENCES

- Anderson, R.C., Hiebert, E.H., Scott, J.A., & Wilkinson, I.A.G. (1985). Becoming a Nation of Readers: The Report of the Commission on Reading (Contract No. 400-83-0057 of the National Institute of Education). Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.
- Bean, R.M. (1992). What Makes Chapter I Special: Perceptions of Reading Specialists, Classroom Teachers, and Principals (Report No. CS-011-135). Pennsylvania State Dept. of Education, Harrisburg. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 352 637)
- Brown, C.G. (1993). Statement of the independent review panes of the national assessment of Chapter 1. In, Reinventing Chapter 1: Annual National Conference of Site Chapter 1 Coordinators. Conference presentations (Sept. 20-23). (pp. 41-41). (Report No. UD-029-588). Washington, DC.. Compensatory Education programs. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 364 616)
- Buckley, J.M. (1990). Perceptions of Principals, Chapter I Teachers, and Classroom Teachers Regarding an Inclass Model for the Delivery of Chapter I Compensatory Education Services (Doctoral dissertation, The University of Alabama & The University of Alabama at Birmingham, 1990).
- Buttler, D., & Clay, M. (1979). Reading Begins at Home: Preparing Children for Reading Before They Go to School. Exeter, NH: Heinemann.
- Clay, M.M. (1993). Reading Recovery: A Guidebook for Teachers in Training. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Come, B., & Fredericks, A.D. (1995). Family literacy in urban schools: Meeting the needs of at-risk children. In L.M. Morrow, J.R. Neuman, C.H. Paratore, (Eds.). Parents and Literacy. (pp.20-24) Newark, DE: IRA Publications.
- Deford, D.E., Lyons, C.A., & Pinnell, G.S. (Eds.). (1991). Bridges to Literacy: Learning from Reading Recovery. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Dewey, J., (1896). My Pedagogic Creed. In L.A. Cremin (Ed.), Dewey on Education: Classics in Education (pp.19 -32). New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

- Fagan, T.W., & Heid, C.A. (1996) Chapter 1 program improvement: Opportunity and practice. Phi Delta Kappan, 77 (8), 582-585.
- Fairley, R.L. (1996, May/June). Impact of Title I on American Education. Education Exchange, Vol.2, No.5. pp. 3-6.
- Holland, K.E. (1987). Parents and Teachers: Can Home and School Literacy Boundaries Be Broken? (Report No. RC-016-801). (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 300 182)
- Legters, N. & Slavin, R.E. (1992). Elementary Students At Risk: A Status Report. (Report No. UD-028-982) Carnegie Corp. of New York, NY. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 352 425)
- Leitner, D. (1990). Portland Reading Recovery Program 1989-90 Evaluation Report. Year 1. (Report No. CS-010-338). Portland Public Schools, OR. Research and Evaluation Dept. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 326 839)
- LeTendre, M.J. (1993). Chapter 1: The Director's Perspective: Ensuring High Quality Education for All Students. In Reinventing Chapter 1: Annual National Conference of State Chapter 1 Coordinators. Conference Presentations (September 20-23). (Report No. UD-029-588). Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (ED), Washington, DC. Compensatory Education Programs. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 364 616)
- Moore, M., & Wade, B. (1993). Reading Recovery: Parent's views. English in Education, 27 (2), 11-18.
- Morrison, T.G. (1996). Reading in the reading class: A novel idea. Education Exchange. Vol. 2, No.5. pp. 4-5.
- Morrow, L.M., (Ed.). (1995). Family Literacy: Connections in Schools and Communities. New Brunswick, NJ: IRA Publications.
- Morrow, L.M., Tracey, D.H., & Maxwell, C.M., (Eds.). (1995). A Survey of Family Literacy in the United States. Newark, DE: IRA Publications.
- Payzant, T.W. (1993). Chapter 1: The assistant secretary's perspective: How American Education can change under our proposal for ESEA. In, Reinventing Chapter 1: Annual National Conference of State Chapter 1 Coordinators. Conference Presentations (Sept. 20-23). (pp. 7-8). (Report No. UD-029-588). Washington, DC. Compensatory Education Programs. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 364 616)

- Pinnell, G.S., Fried, M.D., & Estice, R.M. (1990). Reading Recovery: Learning how to make a difference. The Reading Teacher, (Jan.), 282-295.
- Pinnell, G.S., Lyons, C.A., & DeFord, D.E. (1994). Comparing instructional models for the literacy education of high-risk first graders. Reading Research Quarterly, 29, (1), 9-37.
- Sawyer, W., & Comer, D.E. (1991). Growing Up With Literature. Albany, NY: Delmar Publishers.
- Shockley, B. Michalove, B., & Allen, J.B. (1995). Engaging Families: Connecting Home and School Literacy Communities. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Slavin, R.E. (1991). Chapter 1: A vision for the next quarter century. Phi Delta Kappan, 77 (8), 586-589.
- Slavin, R.E., Karweit, N.L., & Madden, N.A. (Eds.). (1989). Effective Programs For Students At Risk. Boston, London, Sydney, Toronto: Allen and Bacon Publishers.
- Spiegel, D.L. (1995). A comparison of traditional remedial programs and Reading Recovery: Guidelines for success for all programs. The Reading Teacher, 49, (2), 86-96.
- Stringfield, S. (1996, Spring). On people and programs for fulfilling the promise of Title I. Title I Times, 2 (2) 1-2.
- Taylor, D. & Strickland, D.S. (1986). Family Storybook Reading. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

APPENDIX A

Parent Questionnaire

Dear Parent(s):

We are thinking about the needs of children and their parents as we make plans for next year. Since your child was involved in Reading Recovery, we are asking you to help us think about how Reading Recovery affected your child and your family this year.

Please write brief answers to the following questions and send this paper back to school with your child. We really value your opinions. Your answers are quite IMPORTANT to us as we plan for next year!

1. How has Reading Recovery affected your child's experience in school?

2. If you were telling another parent about the Reading Recovery program, what would you say?

3. Did the Reading Recovery teacher let you know about your child's progress? If so, how were you contacted?

4. Circle the number below which best describes your view of Reading Recovery:

1	2	3	4	5
Not a very good program			A very good program	

5. Other Comments:

Thanks so much for your support!

Sincerely,

APPENDIX B

Parent Letter

From: Sharon Bounds, Reading Recovery Teacher

To: Reading Recovery Parent

For the past several years I have been helping children on a daily basis to become a better reader. Thank you so much for all the help you have provided to both your child and to me. I hope that reading with your child each night and helping him/her with the cut up sentence has been a task which brought you closer together as parent and child. It is my belief that your help has been an invaluable aide in helping your son or daughter become a better reader.

I would like to ask your help further. I am studying at UAB to earn an Education Specialist degree with an emphasis on Reading. As part of my program, I must do a research project in an area related to my degree. I would like to interview you as part of this project. The interview will audio taped and the material will be used only for the project. All names will be removed in the final document and fictitious names will be used.

You will be asked to complete a questionnaire which will serve the dual purpose of helping our school plan for next year and helping me with my study.

Please complete the form at the bottom of this page and return it on Friday of this week. Thank you for your help. Please phone me at school (838-7615) or at home (879-7464) if you have any questions. Thanks!

Sharon Bounds

I will co-operate with Mrs. Sharon Bounds on this project. Mrs. Bounds may use the audio taped information in her research as a graduate student at UAB.

Signed: _____

The best day for my interview is: _____

The best time of day is: _____

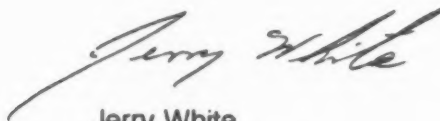
APPENDIX C

Permission Letter

To Whom It May Concern:

Sharon Bounds has the consent of the administration of Barrett Elementary School to conduct, as part of the Ed. S. requirement, her research entitled: PARENT SATISFACTION WITH THE READING RECOVERY PROGRAM AT HAZELWOOD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL. Mrs. Bounds has fully detailed her project with me and I believe both Mrs. Bounds and our school will benefit from the findings of this research project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jerry White". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Jerry White

Principal

APPENDIX D
Certificate of Completion

Department of Curriculum and Instruction
The University of Alabama at Birmingham

Completion of Research Project
for
Educational Specialist Degree

Student's Name: Sharon Lynn Bounds

Date: August 8, 1996

Research Project Title:

PARENT SATISFACTION WITH READING RECOVERY

On this date the completed research project cited above was presented to and approved by the student's research committee.

Maryann Manning Chair

Cecilia Pierce

Gary Manning

Copies to:

Student
Department Chair
Committee Members